UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency Washington, DC 20250 **Notice CRP-349**

For: State Offices and Service Centers

Improving CRP Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) and Water Quality Area Designations

Patricia It Haramense

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs

1 Overview

A Background

To prepare for the next general signup, State FSA Offices may modify approved State CPA's and submit requests for new CPA's. During the CRP offer validation process, a high percentage of offers were marked questionable because of CPA validation errors. This, along with a need to prepare for the use of a geographic information system (GIS), requires more specific delineation of State water quality areas and water quality CPA's.

B Purpose

This notice informs State FSA Offices that:

- the validation criteria for all CRP State water quality areas and water quality CPA's will be at least the 11-digit Hydrologic Unit Area (HUA) codes
- existing approved CRP State water quality areas and water quality CPA's shall be redefined using at least the 11-digit HUA codes and resubmitted
- new or modifications to existing CPA's or State water quality areas must be submitted by November 19, 1999.

Disposal Date	Distribution
February 1, 2000	State Offices; State Offices relay to Service Centers and NRCS State Offices; FS, 80; CREES, 5

2 Redelineating Existing Water Quality Areas and Water Quality CPA's

A
Redelineating
Existing CRP
Water Quality
Areas and Water
Quality CPA's

States with approved CRP water quality areas and/or water quality CPA's shall:

• redelineate, if necessary, and submit at least the 11-digit HUA codes for each existing CPA or water quality area to CEPD by November 19, 1999, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Notes: HUA codes shall be submitted even if the CPA or water quality area boundaries do not change relative to previous designation. The HUA codes will be used as part of the validation criteria for CRP offers and for migration to a GIS-based system.

States and counties that have the 14-digit HUA codes shall use them.

• use 11-digit HUA boundaries as the smallest unit for designating water quality areas and water quality CPA's, unless a State has the 14-digit HUA codes

Example: the boundary for CPA may be 100 foot buffers around intermittent streams. The HUA boundaries must be designated first, even though the CPA is further delineated as narrow strips within the HUA boundaries.

• follow Exhibit 2 for submitting HUA boundaries.

Notes: State FSA Offices must have Microsoft Access installed on their PC to submit the HUA boundaries according to Exhibit 2.

If Microsoft Access is **not** available or installed, contact Jim Williams at 202-720-3265 for further instructions.

3 Modifications to Existing and Establishment of New State CPA's

A County Level Recommendations

Local FSA and NRCS Offices should be afforded the opportunity to make recommendations about the establishment of new or the modification of existing air quality, wildlife, and water quality State CPA's.

B Modifying Approved State CPA's

After signup 18 began, some States discovered that their CPA's included areas that were either inadvertently omitted or included when the recommendation was submitted for approval.

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3 Modifications to Existing and Establishment of New State CPA's (Continued)

B Modifying Approved State CPA's (Continued)

STC's, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, may submit recommendations to **correct** approved State CPA's that currently do not reflect the area that was originally intended to be recommended because of an inadvertent error.

Note: Any recommended modifications to approved State CPA's must include justifiable basis for the modification.

State CPA designations are effective only through the earlier of either 5 years from the date of approval or when the area no longer contains actual or significant adverse environmental impacts that can be addressed by enrollment in CRP for the applicable CPA type.

Any STC request to change existing State CPA's, other than correction of inadvertent errors, must be based on **verifiable**, **documented**, **critical**, **environmentally-related circumstances** and State Technical Committee recommendation.

All modifications to State CPA's must be submitted by November 19, 1999, and approved by DAFP before the start of the next signup. After signup begins, modifications to State CPA's are **not** authorized.

C Submitting Requests to Modify Approved State CPA's

Requests to modify approved State CPA's shall:

• be submitted electronically by following instructions in Exhibit 1

Note: State FSA Office must have Microsoft Access installed on their PC to submit the requests according to Exhibit 2. If Microsoft Access is **not** available or installed, contact Jim Williams at 202-720-3265 for further instructions.

- include all the information requested in Exhibit 3
- provide a copy of a detailed topographic or other similar map of CPA.

Note: Identify the source of the CPA map (i.e.; local NRCS, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources), and, if available, obtain an electronic copy of the map for submission. Otherwise, a hard copy of the map shall be mailed to:

Jim Williams USDA, FSA, CEPD, STOP 0513 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250

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3 Modifications to Existing and Establishment of New State CPA's (Continued)

D Recommending New State CPA's

STC's, which have not previously established CPA's equal to or greater than 10 percent of the cropland in the State and have a strong environmental basis may, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, submit recommendations to establish new State CPA's. STC's shall include the State Technical Committee in the development and submission of all recommendations.

STC's shall request the NRCS State Conservationist to convene a State Technical Committee to develop and recommend CPA's for CRP.

The key purpose of CPA's is to allow States to better address important environmental issues in a planned and coordinated manner.

Note: National and State CPA's cannot overlap. The only exception is within the National Longleaf Pine CPA, because of its unique eligibility requirements.

Recommendations for new State CPA's must:

- address all criteria listed in Exhibit 4
- be designated for 1 of the following primary purposes:
 - enhance water quality
 - enhance wildlife habitat
 - enhance air quality
- clearly define conservation and environmental objectives and include an analysis of how CRP can cost-effectively address these objectives
- emphasize high priority watersheds, ecosystems, or other environmental concerns to which CRP will provide cost-effective high environmental conservation benefits

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3 Modifications to Existing and Establishment of New State CPA's (Continued)

D Recommending New State CPA's (Continued)

 emphasize the scarcity of the habitat or wildlife as the key factor in establishing a wildlife habitat-based CPA, a primary goal of which is to better use CRP, as a means to avoid wildlife species population declines and preserve rare or disappearing habitat

Note: To best accomplish this end, wildlife habitat CPA's should be based, at least in part, on the State Heritage Program so that CRP can help reduce the prospect of future threatened or endangered species. See Exhibit 5 for a list of State Natural Heritage Data Centers.

- provide for adequate monitoring and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of CPA to address the identified environmental concerns
- not exceed, in the aggregate, 10 percent of the cropland of the State.

Note: States within the approved national CPA's of the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, Longleaf Pine, or Prairie Pothole Region shall not include the cropland within those designated areas when determining the 10 percent limitation.

Example: The Great Lakes CPA region covers 1,000,000 acres of cropland in Indiana. The total cropland of the State equals 5,000,000 acres. To determine the effective CPA acreage limitation for the State, subtract the cropland in the Great Lakes CPA region from the total cropland in the State and multiply the remainder times 10 percent $((5,000,000 - 1,000,000) \times .10 = 400,000)$.

Under extraordinary environmentally-related circumstances, such as where the restoration of rare and declining vegetative communities or habitat associated with endangered or threatened species cannot be addressed under the acreage limitation, an exception to the 10 percent limitation may be authorized by DAFP upon submission of verifiable documentation supporting the request.

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3 Modifications to Existing and Establishment of New State CPA's (Continued)

E Submitting Requests

Recommendations for any type of CPA shall:

• be submitted electronically by following Exhibit 2

Notes: State FSA Offices must have Microsoft Access installed on their PC to submit the recommendations according to Exhibit 2.

If Microsoft Access is **not** available or installed, contact Jim Williams at 202-720-3265 for further instructions.

- include all the information requested in Exhibit 4
- provide a copy of a detailed topographic or other similar map of CPA.

Note: The map shall include sufficient detail to delineate the major physical and geographic features, such as highways, streams, and lakes, of the proposed CPA. Identify the source of the CPA map (i.e.; local NRCS, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources), and, if available, obtain an electronic copy of the map for submission. Otherwise, a hard copy of the map shall be mailed to:

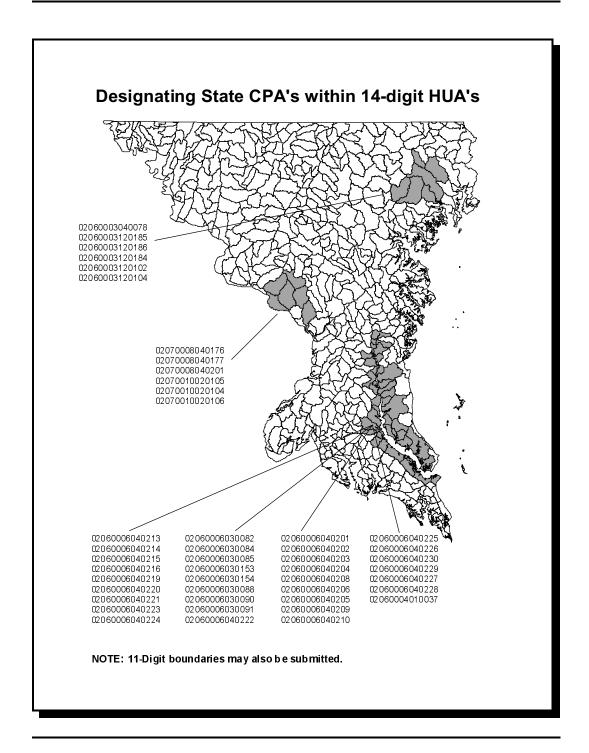
Jim Williams USDA, FSA, CEPD, STOP 0513 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250.

Recommendations will **not** be considered if any items on the format are incomplete.

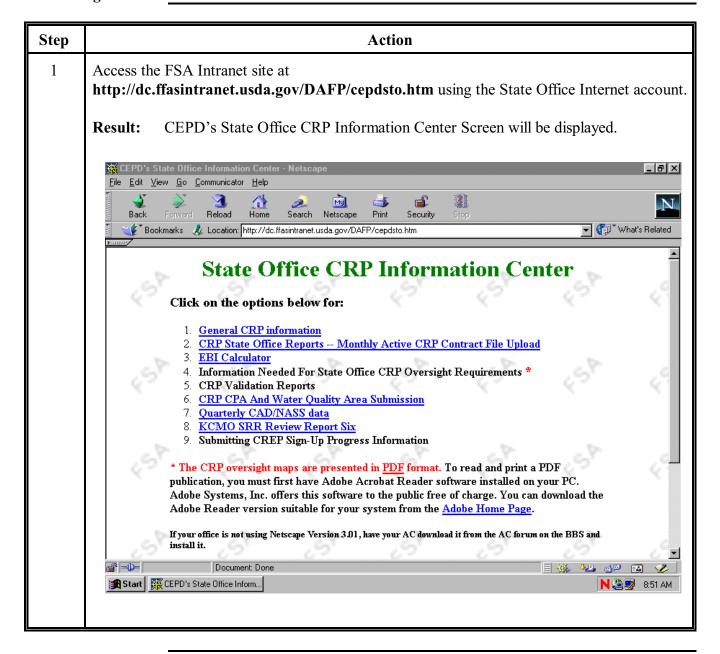
F Final Date to Submit Requests

To be considered, requests to modify approved or establish new State CPA's **must** be received by November 19, 1999.

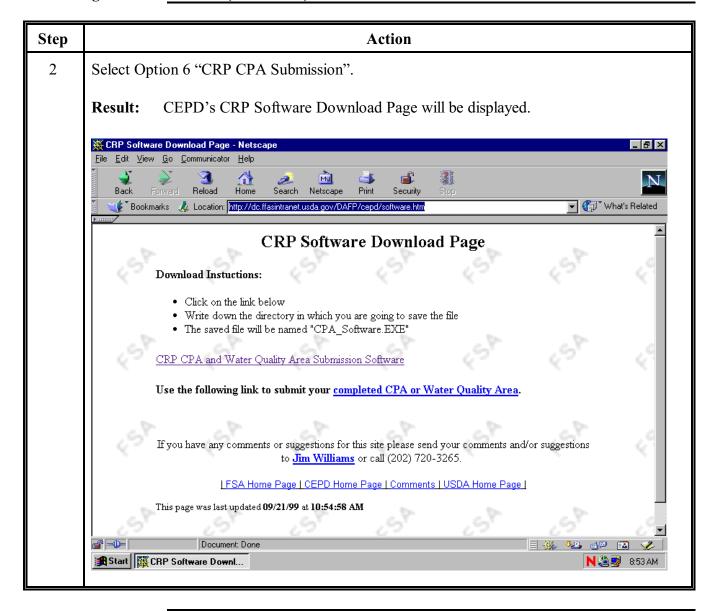
Recommendations shall be e-mailed to: jim williams@wdc.fsa.usda.gov.



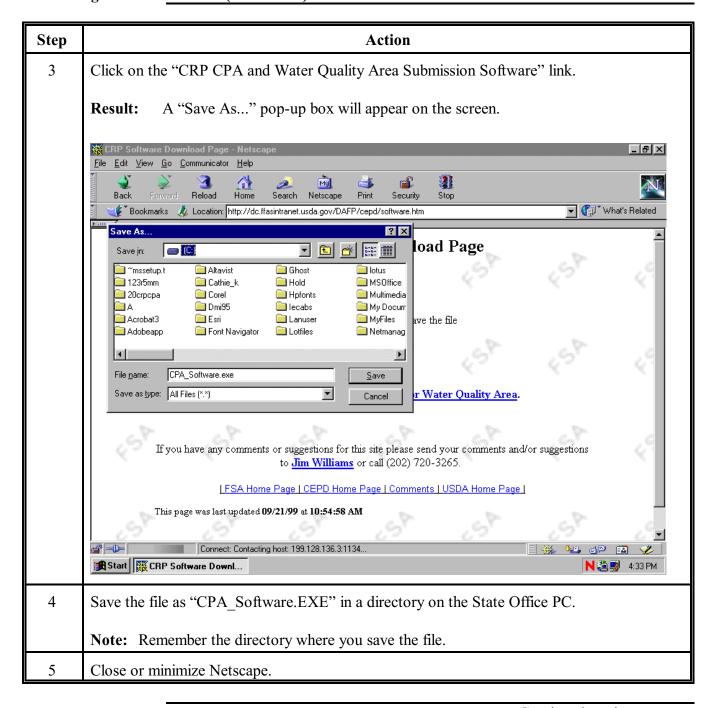
Submitting HUA Boundaries



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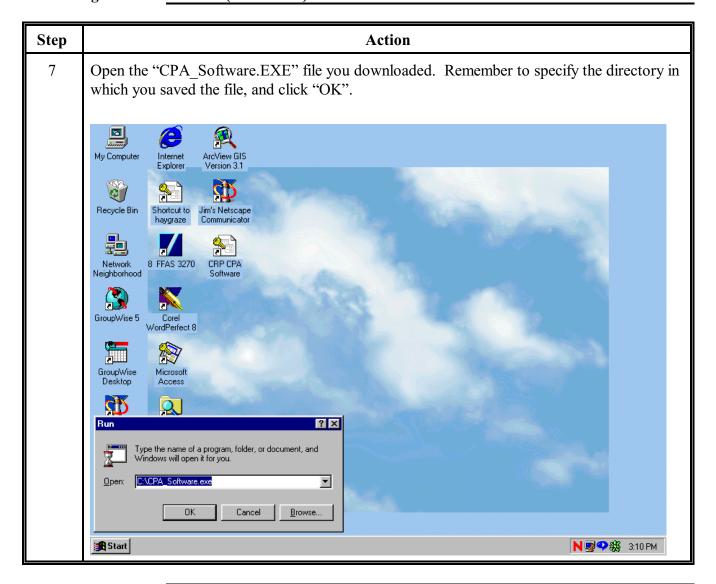
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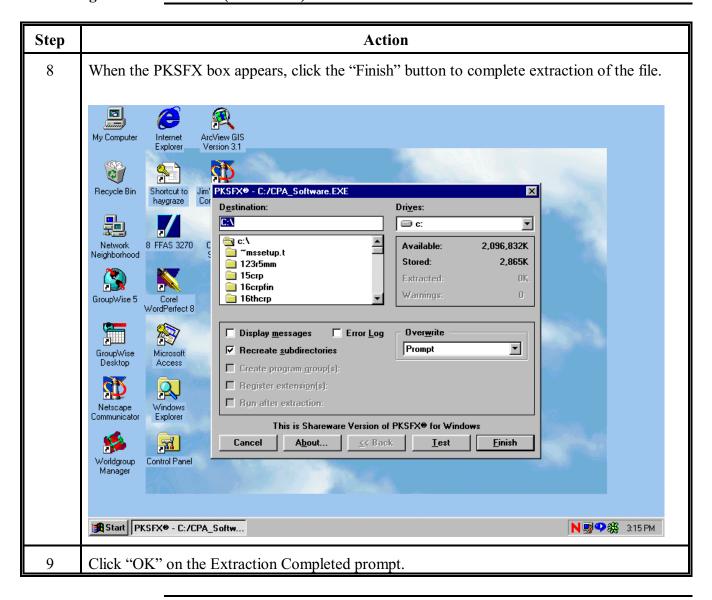
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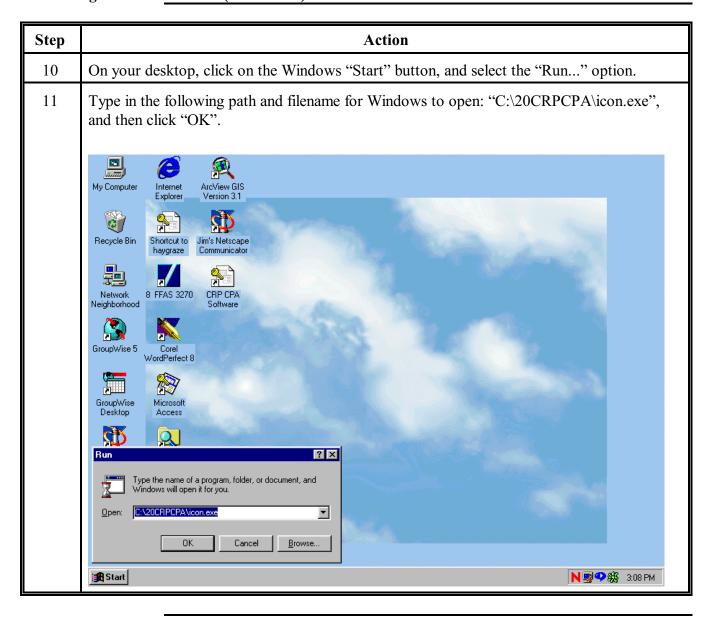
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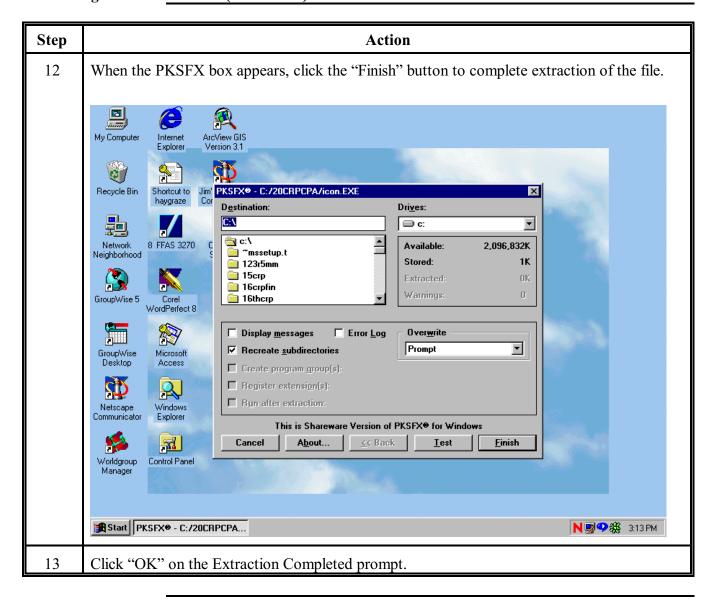
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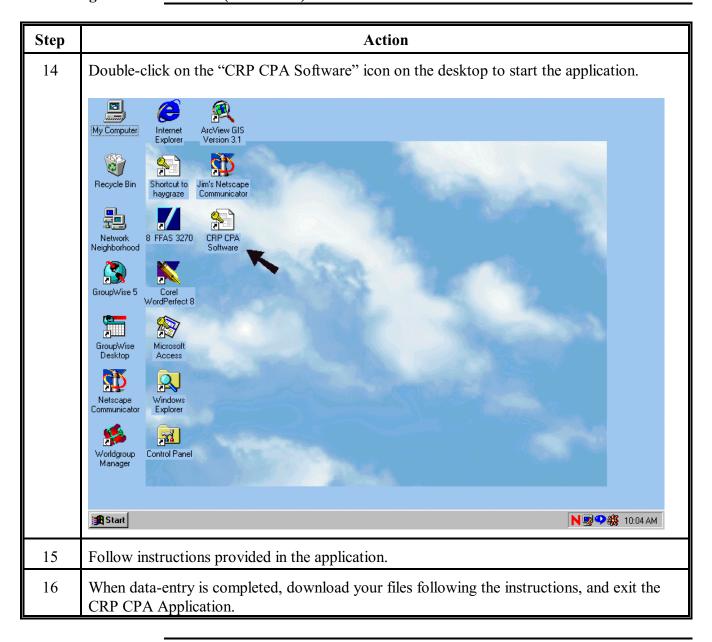
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Step	Action			
17	Follow steps 1 and 2 above, and then click on the link to submit a "completed CPA or Water Quality Area." Attach a copy of the your saved application files to the message before sending.			
	or	or		
	E-mail your files as an attachment to the following address:			
	jim_williams@wdc.fsa.usda.gov			
	Important:	The CRP CPA Software application will indicate the names of the files that are downloaded after data entry. STO's shall make a note of these file names and the name of the directory where they are stored. These are the file which shall be submitted in the e-mail attachment.		

Request for Modification to Existing Conservation Priority Area

REQUEST FOR A MODIFICATION TO AN EXISTING CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA

The following information will be needed to submit your request for a modification to an existing conservation priority area:

- State Name
- CPA Name
- Current CPA Size (acres)
- Proposed CPA Size (acres)
- Justification for the modification of the existing State CPA
- List of counties within CPA
- List of 11-Digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (for water quality CPA's)
- Date the State Technical Committee minutes were signed.

Request for a New Conservation Priority Area Designation

REQUEST FOR A NEW CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA DESIGNATION FOR THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

The following information will be needed to submit your request for a new conservation priority area designation:

General Information

- State Name
- CPA Name
- CPA Size (acres)
- Estimated Cropland in CPA (acres) <u>1</u>/
- Total State Cropland (acres) 1/
- Total Cropland in all Other Approved CPA's (acres) <u>2</u>/

Section A.

• Primary purpose of CPA. (Select only 1 category)

Water Quality (complete Sections A and B)

Air Quality (complete Sections A and C)

Wildlife Habitat (complete Sections A and D)

- Project Name
- List of counties within CPA
- List of 11-Digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (for water quality CPA's)
- Cropland acres within project that have an EI ≥ 8
- Cropland acres within project that have an EI<8
- Date the State Technical Committee minutes were signed

Note: Recommendations for CPA's which are not delineated by geographic boundaries, such as specific soil types or specific wildlife habitat, shall also include the following:

- Description of the criteria used to establish CPA
- Documentation that the 10 percent cropland limitation is not exceeded
- Exclude the cropland acreage that is in a national CPA.
- 2/ Exclude the cropland acreage that is in a national CPA and cropland in this CPA.

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Request for a New Conservation Priority Area Designation (Continued)

Section B.

CPA'S WITH A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WATER QUALITY

CRP can improve water quality by reducing the quantity of sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants that enter the Nation's water courses and aquifers, and by reducing the leaching of nitrates and pesticides into groundwater. Water quality benefits are dependent on the extent to which erosion, runoff, and leaching are reduced to the benefit of human and wildlife populations. The geographic location and density of CRP tracts along with the type of conservation practices implemented, in concert, can provide these benefits. A detailed planning process should be used that evaluates existing water quality improvement plans and identifies areas where enrollment in CRP will be most beneficial. This information can then be used to provide the data below.

PROVIDE DATA FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- 1. Describe the nature and extent that cropland contributes to the agricultural water quality (surface/ground water) problem. Include the major pollutant source (sediment, nutrients, etc.) and the extent that cropland contributes to the water quality problem. Are there other sources of pollutants (urban, animal waste, etc.) that contribute to water quality problems within CPA? Cite sources of data.
- 2. What percent of the cropland identified within CPA is expected to enroll in CRP?
- 3. Describe the importance of the project to meet Federal, State, and local environmental laws. Is the project within a State designated 319 priority water list, 305(b) reports, section 303(d), etc.
- 4. Describe the projected benefits of CPA. What are the projected benefits (drinking water, recreation, etc.) that CPA will provide? What is the human population served? What benefits to wildlife populations will accrue? Will the project provide benefits to threatened and endangered species or rare and declining vegetative communities, etc.?
- 5. How will CRP enrollment and practices within CPA achieve water quality improvement? How much reduction of the pollutant loading will the project achieve? Will the reduced loading achieve quantifiable benefits?
- 6. Describe the existing and proposed monitoring and evaluation effort of CPA.

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Request for a New Conservation Priority Area Designation (Continued)

Section C.

CPA'S WITH A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF AIR QUALITY

CRP can improve air quality by reducing the quantity of airborne dust and particulates (PM 10) from cropland wind erosion that causes damage to nearby affected human populations. Air quality benefits are dependent on the extent to which wind erosion and airborne particulates are reduced to the benefit of human population centers. The geographic location and density of CRP tracts may provide these benefits. A detailed planning process should be used that evaluates existing air quality improvement plans and identifies areas where enrollment in CRP will be most beneficial. This information can then be used to provide the data below.

PROVIDE DATA FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- 1. Describe the nature and extent that cropland contributes to the air quality problem. Include the frequency of "dust storms", frequency of droughts, the average "C" factor from the wind erosion equation, population impacted by wind-borne particulate matter within 100 miles of CPA, etc. Cite sources of data.
- 2. Describe the importance of CPA to meet Federal, State, and local air quality laws. Is the project within an EPA- or State-designated nonattainment area? Does wind-borne dust provide significant economic damages to the community? What are the economic impacts of wind erosion within the community? Cite sources of data.
- 3. Is the air quality problem primarily associated with wind erosion from cropland acreage?
- 4. How will CRP achieve a significant reduction in wind-blown dust, such as practices to be used, etc.? What is the estimated reduction?
- 5. What percent of the cropland identified within CPA is expected to enroll in CRP?
- 6. To what extent is monitoring and evaluation available to quantify the impacts of CRP in CPA? Are there air monitoring stations within the project area? Is there baseline data available to show improvement through CRP?

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Request for a New Conservation Priority Area Designation (Continued)

Section D.

CPA'S WITH A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WILDLIFE

CRP can provide and improve habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species by establishing certain types of permanent vegetative cover on cropland. Wildlife benefits are dependent on the extent and type of vegetative cover established. Properly concentrated CRP enrollment can provide substantial benefit to endangered, threatened, and declining species and vegetative communities. These benefits will only be realized when appropriate conservation practices are implemented using proper vegetative species. A detailed planning process should be used that evaluates existing needs and identifies areas where enrollment in CRP will be most beneficial. This information can then be used to provide the data below.

PROVIDE DATA FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- Describe the wildlife habitats to be created, enhanced, or maintained by designation as CPA. What wildlife
 species habitat will be protected or enhanced? What wildlife species may be negatively impacted by CRP? Cite
 sources of data.
- 2. List the practices that must be implemented to create, enhance, or maintain the wildlife habitat necessary to meet the purpose of the designation. Describe the benefit the practice(s) will provide for the wildlife habitat.
- 3. Describe the importance of CPA to meet Federal, State, and local wildlife goals. Is the project consistent with a Federal or State Wildlife Conservation Plan? What is the economic impact of wildlife enhancement for the species that will benefit by the proposed CPA? Will CPA increase recreational opportunities due to wildlife? What impacts will CPA have on threatened or endangered species? Cite sources of data.
- 4. Is the lack of wildlife habitat for the desired species due to acreage being cropped?
- 5. What are the projected impacts of CRP on the desired wildlife, such as projected increases in numbers, reduced winter mortality rates, etc.?
- 6. What percent of the cropland identified within CPA is expected to enroll in CRP?
- 7. Describe the existing and proposed monitoring and evaluation effort of CPA.

State Natural Heritage Data Centers

Alabama Natural Heritage Section Dept. Of Cons. & Natural Resources 64 N. Union Street, Room 421 Montgomery, AL 36130 205-242-3484	Delaware Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control RD 1 P.O. Box 81 Smyrna, DE 19977 302-653-2880
Alaska Natural Heritage Program 707 A Street, Suite 208 Anchorage, AK 99501 907-257-2702	Association for Biodiversity Information P.O. Box 1737 3421 M Street, NW Washington, DC 20007
Arizona Heritage Data Mgmt. System Arizona Game & Fish Department 2221 W. Greenway Road Phoenix, AZ 85023 602-789-3612	Florida Natural Areas Inventory 1018 Thomasville Road Tallahassee, FL 32303 904-224-8207
Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission Suite 1500, Tower Building 323 Center Street Little Rock, AR 72201 501-324-9150	Georgia Natural Heritage Program Georgia Department of Natural Resources 2117 U.S. Highway 278 SE Social Circle, GA 30279 706-557-3032
California Natural Heritage Division Department of Fish & Game 1220 S Street Sacramento, CA 95814 916-322-2493	Hawaii Natural Heritage Program 1116 Smith Street, Suite 201 Honolulu, HI 96817 808-537-4508
Colorado Natural Heritage Program Colorado State University 103 Natural Resources Building Fort Collins, CO 80523 970-491-1309	Idaho Conservation Data Center Department of Fish & Game 600 South Walnut Street, Box 25 Boise, ID 83707 208-334-3402
Connecticut Natural Diversity Database Department of Environmental Protection 79 Elm Street, Store Level Hartford, CT 06106-5127 203-424-3540	Illinois Natural Heritage Division Department of Natural Resources 524 South 2nd Street Springfield, IL 62701 217-785-8774

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State Natural Heritage Data Centers (Continued)

Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center Department of Natural Resources 402 West Washington Street, Room W267 Indianapolis, IN 46204 317-232-4052	Maryland Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources Tawes State Office Building, E-1 Annapolis, MD 21401 410-974-2870
Iowa Natural Areas Inventory Department of Natural Resources Wallace State Office Building Des Moines, IA 50319 515-281-8524	Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Route 135 Westborough, MA 01581 508-792-7270
Kansas Natural Heritage Inventory Kansas Biological Survey 2041 Constant Avenue Lawrence, KS 66047-2906 913-864-3453	Michigan Natural Features Inventory Mason Building, 5th Floor Box 30444 Lansing, MI 48909-7944 517-373-1552
Kentucky Natural Heritage Program Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission 801 Schenkel Lane Frankfort, KY 40601 502-573-2886	Minnesota Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Department of Natural Resources 500 Lafayette Road, Box 7 St. Paul, MN 55155 612-297-4964
Louisiana Natural Heritage Program Department of Wildlife and Fisheries P.O. Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 504-765-2821	Mississippi Natural Heritage Program 111 North Jefferson Street Jackson, MS 39201-2897 601-354-7303
Maine Natural Area Programs Department of Conservation 93 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0093 207-287-2211	Missouri Natural Heritage Database Department of Conservation P.O. Box 180 Jefferson City, MO 65102 314-751-4115
District of Columbia Natural Heritage Program U.S. National Park Service 13025 Riley's Lock Road Poolesville, MD 20837 301-427-1354	Montana Natural Heritage Program 1515 E 6th Avenue Helena, MT 59620 406-444-3009

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State Natural Heritage Data Centers (Continued)

Nebraska Natural Heritage Program Game and Parks Commission P.O. Box 30370 Lincoln, NE 68503 402-471-5421	Ohio Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources Fountain Square, Building F Columbus, OH 43224 614-265-6453
Nevada Natural Heritage Program Department of Conservation & Natural Resources 1550 E. College Parkway, Suite 145 Carson City, NV 89710 702-687-4245	Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory Oklahoma Biological Survey 111 East Chesapeake Street University of Oklahoma Norman, OK 73019-0575 405-325-1985
New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory Department of Resources & Economic Development P.O. Box 1856 Concord, NH 03302 603-271-3623	Oregon Natural Heritage Program 821 SE 14th Avenue Portland, OR 97214 503-731-3070
New Jersey Natural Heritage Program Office of Natural Lands Management 22 South Clinton Avenue, CN404 Trenton, NJ 08625-0404 609-984-1339	Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory-East 34 Airport Drive Middletown, PA 17057 717-948-3962
New Mexico Natural Heritage Program University of New Mexico 2500 Yale Boulevard, SE, Suite 100 Albuquerque, NM 87131-1091 505-277-1991	PNDI-Central Bureau of Forestry P.O. Box 8552 Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552 717-783-0388
New York Natural Heritage Program Department of Environmental Conservation 700 Troy-Schenectady Road Latham, NY 12110-2400 518-783-3932	PNDI-West Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 316 Fourth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412-288-2777
North Carolina Heritage Program Dept. of Environment, Health & Natural Resources P.O. Box 27687 Raleigh, NC 27611 919-733-7701	Rhode Island Heritage Program Department of Environmental Management 83 Park Street Providence, RI 02903 401-277-2776
North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory Parks & Recreation Department 1835 Bismarck Expressway Bismarck, ND 58504 701-328-5357	South Carolina Heritage Trust Wildlife & Marine Resources Department P.O. Box 167 Columbia, SC 29202 803-734-3893

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State Natural Heritage Data Centers (Continued)

South Dakota Natural Heritage Data Base SD Department of Game, Fish & Parks 523 East Capitol Avenue Pierre, SD 57501-3182	Virginia Division of Natural Heritage Department of Conservation & Recreation 1500 East Main Street, Suite 312 Richmond, VA 23219 804-786-7951
Division of Natural Heritage Department of Environment & Conservation 401 Church Street Nashville, TN 37243-0447 615-532-0431	Washington Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 47016 Olympia, WA 98504-7016 360-902-1340
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 3000 IH-35 South, Suite 100 Austin, TX 78704 512-912-7011	West Virginia Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources Ward Road, P.O. Box 67 Elkins, WV 26241 304-637-0245
Utah Natural Heritage Program Division of Wildlife Resources 1596 West North Temple Salt Lake City, UT 84116 801-538-4761	Wisconsin Natural Heritage Program Department of Natural Resources 101 South Webster Street, Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707 608-266-7012
Vermont Nongame & Natural Heritage Program Fish & Wildlife Department 103 South Main Street, 10 South Waterbury, VT 05671-0501 802-241-3700	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database 1604 Grand Avenue, Suite 2 Laramie, WY 82070 307-745-5026
Conservation Science Division The Nature Conservancy 1815 N. Lynn Street Arlington, VA 22209 703-841-5300	